



Click.
afrc.af.mil



Tweet.
@citizenairman



Like.
@citizenairman

CITIZEN AIRMAN

Volume 73 No. 6

December 2021

Shoot, Move, Communicate

Minnesota Reservists accelerate
readiness on new training course





VALUES, CULTURE, VICTORY

"You didn't just fly coal to Berlin and keep a city from freezing and the lights from going out. You inspired at least one German boy to be like you when he grew up."
- Retired Col. Wolfgang Samuel, USAF, a 13-year-old Berliner during the Airlift

Heroes of the Air Force Reserve,

As we close out 2021, so many of you took part in events that shaped history this year. The efforts of our mobility Airmen to evacuate our most vulnerable allies from Afghanistan were nothing short of remarkable. Even now, Reserve Citizen Airmen are working on the enduring mission of housing our partners, surging to create safe accommodations at bases across the world.

Our performance during those events alone would be enough for any organization to be incredibly proud. These accomplishments were only part of our larger story. As these operations were taking place overseas, the 302nd Airlift Wing had all eight of its aircraft flying aerial firefighting missions here at home for the first time since 2012. The Dixie Fire, which burned nearly one million acres between July 13 and Oct. 25, caused us to have the second busiest fire season in the history of our aerial firefighting mission.

The 302nd was not the only wing engaged in taking care of Americans. The Hurricane Hunters of the 403rd Wing were working nonstop to collect data on several storms, including Hurricane Ida, which rapidly grew in strength and made landfall on Aug. 29, just three days after forming. Because of their efforts, state and local partners were able to prepare and save lives as Ida carved a swath of destruction from Louisiana to New York.

As a team, we were successful in each of these high-impact operations in the midst of a pandemic and tight budgets. The sudden contraction of available funding this summer was caused in part

by increased labor costs and higher than anticipated retention in both our military and civilian workforces. Unfortunately, continuing resolutions did not provide funding for additional ART-to-AGR conversions, further delaying our call-to-duty hiring actions.

As a command leadership team, we are acutely aware that these issues impact you and your families. The command chief and I spent significant time engaging both chambers of Congress to ensure they fully fund our RPA and O&M requests. Your wing leadership teams actively participated in budget meetings to streamline communication and maximize transparency.

Over the course of 2021, we rose to meet every challenge with combat power that is accessible, cost-effective and experienced. 2022 will bring its own challenges, some similar to this year and perhaps some novel ones. I remain confident in our ability to face the challenges that next year will bring because of the strength of our culture.

First and foremost, Air Force Reserve culture is rooted in the uniqueness of our organization. Many Reserve Citizen Airmen, myself included, left active duty because the Air Force Reserve was a better fit for our lives, and we were valued for our unique contributions.

For me, joining the Air Force Reserve was like coming home. Secondly, we have a culture built on compliance. As professionals, we must be ready to execute our mission at a moment's notice. Our nation needs us to lean forward to aggressively maintain our readiness.

Our team fully embraces diversity and inclusion, because we cannot face any of the challenges ahead of us without each member serving at their fullest potential.

Finally, we have a culture of volunteerism. Whenever our nation needs the Air Force Reserve, there are so many willing to step forward and answer the call to service.

Our culture flows from our values. From the Berlin Airlift to Operation Allies Refuge, the distinct lines between our values and the ideologies of our adversaries have inspired people the world over. As we begin a new year with so much uncertainty, our resolute commitment to our values will help us persevere through any storm.

I am proud to serve with each of you. ■

RICHARD W. SCOBEE
Lieutenant General, USAF
Chief of Air Force Reserve
Commander, Air Force Reserve Command



'TRUST IS THE ESSENCE OF LEADERSHIP'

"Leadership involves solving problems. The day soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help or concluded you do not care. Either case is a failure of leadership."
- Secretary Colin Powell

Teammates,

I want to start by commemorating the life of a great American we recently lost to complications from COVID-19. Gen. Colin Powell, the former secretary of state, has been a personal inspiration to me, and many of you, for a large majority of my career.

I had the distinct pleasure of personally meeting General Powell during a Boys and Girls Club of America event back in 2009, and his words on building trust and leadership ring truer now more than ever. He once said that "trust is the essence of leadership." I want to provide a few thoughts on trust.

As we look back on the past year, we can see how both strong interpersonal and institutional trust have paid huge dividends as we have faced some of the toughest challenges 2021 has thrown at us. Building that trust starts with listening. Over the past year, I have been grateful that we have been able to perform unit visits and hear directly from so many of our Reserve Citizen Airmen. Spending time listening to both your successes and your barriers to success always strengthens our resolve to work harder at headquarters to remove those barriers.

Of course listening is just the first step. As leaders, we have to work to continually reform the organization to make the lives of our Airmen better. During the past year, we worked to fill all of our full-time first sergeant positions and chaplain positions for the purpose of helping Airmen.

As an Air Force, we have committed to listening to suggestions from the field to continually make our service better. For example, the reforms to dress and appearance standards this year were driven by a grass-roots campaign of women who spent countless hours of their off-duty time to make data-driven policy recommendations.

Without trust, innovation cannot survive. A subordinate is unlikely to bring up a potentially game changing idea if he or she thinks they will either be vetoed without being heard out, or worse, not given credit when the idea works.

This year at the Air Force Association Conference, we saw how that trust in action could bring incredible results. Our own Staff Sgt. Santosh Devkota was recognized with the Air Force's General Spencer Award for innovation after he developed an offline database to streamline aerial port operations during system outages. He saw an opportunity to solve a problem. His leadership knew that doing so was within his abilities and advocated for him. When he was successful, they ensured he was recognized.

Of course, sometimes we fall short of the mark when it comes to maintaining trust. One example was the financial issues we experienced early in this fiscal year. We cancelled several training orders with little notice, delayed AGR hiring and caused some significant pain for units.

As leaders, we saw this impacting units and took steps to prioritize those with the greatest need. We also cancelled several of our own events, only doing what was absolutely mission essential to free up resources to minimize the impact on our formations. We also convened a weekly meeting with every wing commander to allow for greater transparency and to solicit feedback. It is only through frank and transparent discussions about our problems that we can continue to build institutional trust and work together to overcome them.

I want to close by talking about another recent event. In October, on behalf of the Air Force Reserve's entire enlisted corps, I presented Lt. Gen. Scobee an invitation to be inducted into the Air Force Reserve Order of the Sword. The Order of the Sword was adopted by noncommissioned officers in 1967 as a way to honor individuals who have made significant contributions to the enlisted corps.

Over the arc of his entire career, General Scobee has continually earned the trust of the enlisted force. During my entire tenure as his senior enlisted advisor, this man has had my back. More importantly, he has had the back of the enlisted corps. He has advocated for impactful policies such as expanding Tricare Reserve Select and ART-to-AGR conversions, which are particularly helpful to our junior enlisted personnel, all while simultaneously leading this command through a myriad of challenges, including fiscal constraints, civil unrest and a pandemic.

I can't think of anyone who has done more for this command, and am honored to have represented our enlisted corps in presenting this invitation. I look forward to honoring him at the upcoming ceremony, and will keep you all posted as the date draws near.

As always, I am extremely proud of each of you, and honored to serve alongside you as your command chief. ■

TIMOTHY C. WHITE JR.
Chief Master Sergeant, USAF
Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief of Air Force Reserve
Command Chief Master Sergeant, Air Force Reserve Command

Table of Contents

FEATURED STORIES



Army Private First Class Anthony Sanchez

06

In Their Shoes

Reservists help Afghan evacuees settle into their new lives

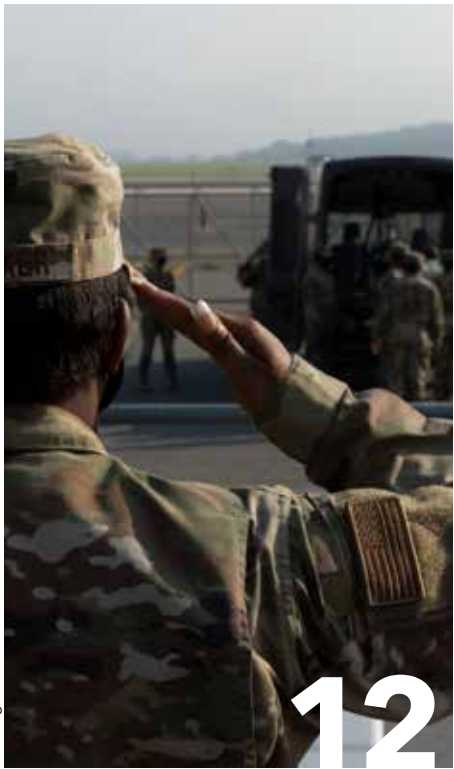


Chris Farley

09

'Talk to Me, Airman'

Minnesota Reservists learn to shoot, move and communicate



Tech. Sgt. Joshua Williams

12

Mortuary Affairs Training

Niagara Airmen travel to Dover to learn critical mission



ON THE COVER:

Tech. Sgt. Julia Matthews, 934th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, engages multiple targets with her M4 carbine during a shoot, move and communicate exercise at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport Air Reserve Station, Minnesota. For more on how the Minnesota Reservists are training to effectively operate in an austere environment, see the story on page 9. (Chris Farley)

Chief of Air Force Reserve's Strategic Priorities



Priority 1: Prioritize strategic depth and accelerate readiness
#ReserveReady



Priority 2: Develop resilient leaders
#ReserveResilient



Priority 3: Reform the organization
#ReserveReform

Look for these icons for stories that focus on these three priorities.



A publication by the U.S. Air Force Reserve



A Desire to Help
307th Bomb Wing Airman makes second pandemic deployment... **10**

Girls in Aviation
Reservists encourage youngsters to consider career in the air..... **11**

Help Where It's Needed
Reservist excels at multiple tasks during deployment..... **13**

Supra Coders
Reserve Space Wing boasts graduates of intensive training course... **14**

'He Knew My Name'
Reserve Citizen Airman finds courage to seek help..... **15**

Rally in the Rockies
Airmen hone expeditionary skills at 22nd Air Force exercise.... **16**

Northern Exposure
Oklahoma Reservists train in Alaska..... **18**

A Decade of Excellence
Force Generation Center reaches historic milestone..... **19**

Castle Forge
Reservists deliver agile airpower during Black Sea operation.... **20**

Teaming Up for Training
307th Bomb Wing, Airbus exchange ideas, best practices..... **22**

Serving Together
Brothers bond as Reserve firefighters..... **23**

The U.S. Postal Service requires certain periodicals to publish a Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation each year.

Title of Publication – Citizen Airman
USPS Publication Number – 0887-9680
Owner – U.S. Air Force Reserve
Publisher – Lt. Gen. Richard Scobee
Editor – Col. Beth Horine
Managing Editor – Bo Joyner
Frequency of Issue – Bi-monthly
Location of Office of Publication –
HQ AFRC/PAO
155 Richard Ray Blvd.
Robins AFB, Ga. 31098-1661

Copies Distributed (October 2021 issue) – 75,751
Free Distribution by Mail
(October 2021 issue) – 75,751
Free Distribution Outside the Mail
(October 2021 issue) – 375
Copies Not Distributed (October 2021 issue) – 0
Total Copies Distributed and Not Distributed
(October 2021 issue) – 74,736

CITIZEN AIRMAN

Leadership
Gen. CQ Brown, Jr.
Chief of Staff, United States Air Force

Lt. Gen. Richard Scobee
Commander, Air Force Reserve Command

Col. Chad Gibson
Acting Director, Public Affairs,
Air Force Reserve Command

Magazine Staff
Bo Joyner
Editor, Public Affairs,
Air Force Reserve Command

Anthony Burns
Graphic Designer, Public Affairs,
Air Force Reserve Command

Contributing Writers
Tech. Sgt. Frank Casciotta, Senior Master Sgt. Ted Daigle, Chris Farley, Staff Sgt. Nije Hightower, Tech. Sgt. Lauren Kelly, Capt. Andrew Layton, Lt. Col. Marnee A. C. Losurdo, Maj. William Mojica, Tech. Sgt. Daryn Murphy, Lt. Col. Jon Quinlan, Army Private First Class Anthony Sanchez, Senior Airman Erica Webster and Tech. Sgt. Joshua Williams

Citizen Airman magazine (ISSN No. 0887-9680) is published bi-monthly by Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command Office of Public Affairs for the commander of Air Force Reserve Command. Periodical postage paid at Warner Robins, Georgia, and additional mailing offices. Copies are mailed, free of charge, to the homes of all Reservists. Content is normally news articles and features developed for release to commercial media as part of the Air Force Reserve's continuing public affairs program. Opinions of contributors are not necessarily those of the Air Force Reserve. All photos are U.S. Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated. Readers-per-copy ratio: 4-1. Send inquiries and submissions to HQ AFRC/PAO, 155 Richard Ray Blvd., Robins AFB, GA 31098-1661. Or, email them to HQAFRC.PAO.Operations@us.af.mil. For questions about the magazine or its contents, call (478) 327-1771 or DSN 497-1771.

Moving? PLEASE DO NOT SEND CHANGES OF ADDRESS TO CITIZEN AIRMAN. To continue receiving the magazine, unit Reservists, as well as people serving a statutory tour of duty, should send a change of address to their military personnel flight or unit orderly room. Individual mobilization augmentees should call the Total Force Service Center-Denver toll free at 1-800-525-0102 or DSN 665-0102.

POSTMASTER: Please send all Forms 3579 to Citizen Airman, HQ AFRC/PAO, 155 Richard Ray Blvd., Robins AFB, GA 31098-1661.

In Their Shoes

Reserve Citizen Airmen from Afghanistan help evacuees settle into their new lives

Story and Photos by Army Private First Class Anthony Sanchez



Senior Airman Kalmullah Ghorbandi, left, and Airman 1st Class Ahmed Sofizada at Aman Omid Village on Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico. The Reserve Citizen Airmen are providing translation services, advice and encouragement for Afghan evacuees settling into their new lives in the United States.

A pair of Reserve Citizen Airmen helping Afghan evacuees settle into their new lives in the United States are in a unique position to offer advice and encouragement to the refugees.

Senior Airman Kalmullah Ghobandi, a Reserve Citizen Airman assigned to the 349th Air Mobility Wing, Travis Air Force Base, California, and Airman First Class Ahmed Sofizada, a Reserve Citizen Airman assigned to the 38th Intelligence Squadron, Beale AFB, California, have been temporarily assigned to Holloman AFB, New Mexico, since August to support Operation Allies Welcome – the Department of Homeland Security-led effort to support vulnerable Afghans as they safely resettle in the United States.

In addition to providing critical language assistance, Ghobandi and Sofizada can offer personal insight into what it’s like to make the move from Afghanistan to the United States.

To escape the Taliban, Ghorbandi’s family began the immigration process to the United States in 2000.

“I’m originally from Afghanistan in the Parwan Province,” Ghorbandi said. “I was 8 years old when I moved to the U.S., and it was about a three- to four-year process. We were supposed to come in 2001, but after the terrorist attacks on 9/11, it got pushed back to 2004.

“When I came to the U.S., I knew very little English – just the basics. I spent about a year and a half in English as a Second Language class. It took me a good two years to be fully conversational.”

Sofizada’s journey to America began a little differently. In 2001, the Taliban controlled most of Afghanistan, which forced Sofizada and his family to flee their home in Kabul when he was a teenager.

“We heard on the radio that the Taliban were taking Kabul City,” he said. “We got onto a bus, and it was really overloaded. It was around midnight that we started moving towards the Panjshir Valley. There was a big convoy of people – civilians just getting in their vehicles and trying to run away before the Taliban got to Kabul. I remember looking out the window, and, as far as I could see, there were lights coming in behind us and going towards the northern part of Afghanistan just to run away from the Taliban.”

After arriving in the Panjshir Valley, which fell under the control of the United Islamic National Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan, he had to adjust to life during the reign of the Taliban.

“There were some days where you would go without food, and just try to find something like an apple or a mulberry,” Sofizada said. “The supply routes were blocked off by the Taliban. If you were lucky, you would have bread.”

Sofizada and his family stayed in the Panjshir Valley until the occupation was over. They then returned to their home. Sofizada would later learn English and help U.S. forces in Afghanistan as a translator and linguist.

“Those guys are really brave, and they were willing to sacrifice everything to keep our family safe,” Sofizada said. “That’s what I learned from the Green Berets – to be selfless, always do the right thing and put your life on the line for others.

“It took me a while to earn their trust, because they were in a foreign country. Once I earned it, I felt like I was part of a brotherhood. I never felt they looked down on me, and I was treated like a soldier.”

Sofizada immigrated to San Francisco in June 2009.

“I thought that since the U.S. has given me a new life and I really enjoy living here, it would be a good idea to serve and actually wear the uniform,” he said.



Sofizada interacts with an Afghan child at Aman Omid Village.

Ghorbandi joined the Air Force Reserve in 2016. Sofizada joined in 2018. Both said the selfless service of the American forces in Afghanistan inspired them to enlist.

The Airmen said they were excited to serve at Holloman and ease the transition of Afghan evacuees into their temporary home on base, dubbed Aman Omid Village.

“I get a lot of gratification from helping out people who I know are in the same situation I was in,” Ghorbandi said. “It’s just been amazing seeing their faces and seeing the kids who are now getting a chance – especially since a lot of these kids are the age I was when I first came here.”

Sofizada had the unique opportunity to welcome his own family to Aman Omid Village. His four brothers, two sisters and parents came through the village.

“I’m really happy that they’re here and safe with me,” he said.

“Talking with the kids has been the best experience for me,” Ghorbandi said. “You see the light and the hope in their eyes, and it makes you think about how much suffering they must have gone through. They will still go through a lot of obstacles in their lives, but as long as they keep that hope, I know they’ll have a chance in this country.” #ReserveResilient

(Sanchez is assigned to the Task Force Holloman public affairs office.) ■

Ghorbandi offers encouragement to a young Afghan evacuee at Holloman.

A Breakthrough Moment

IMAs lead groundbreaking academic discussion at China cyber conference

From Staff Reports



With tens of thousands of cyberattacks targeting United States systems and infrastructure every day, the urgency of building and growing the most robust capabilities and strategies in the information domain could not be more pronounced.

Leading this effort for the Department of Defense is U.S. Cyber Command, whose mission is to direct, synchronize and coordinate cyberspace planning and operations to defend and advance national interests in collaboration with a variety of domestic and international partners.

Recently, these Cyber Command partners have expanded to include U.S. academic institutions and think tanks; and Air Force Reservists are playing pivotal roles in leading and sustaining that effort.

In September, three Individual Mobilization Augmentees led Cyber Command's first-ever Academic Partnership Conference via a closed China cyber conference between Stanford University's Hoover Institution and strategists and analysts from Cyber Command.

The event was the result of Cyber Command's vision of developing deeper ties between the command and top U.S. scholars to deliberate on various contexts

related to cyber operations. More events are expected, including partnerships with academic institutions like Harvard University, think tanks like the Foreign Policy Research Institute and the Hoover Institution, and many others.

"This is a breakthrough moment for the command in many ways," said Col. Bob Murray, who moderated portions of the conference and helped organize the event for Cyber Command. "The broad strategic views of academia can add tremendous value and alternative perspectives for the analysts, planners and operators."

This event focused on how cyber fits within Chinese strategic priorities, how China thinks about cyber operations and technology within its broader foreign policy, and how China is using information and disinformation to apply its influence internationally.

Lt. Col. Jackie Schneider, a fellow at the Hoover Institution and expert on military strategy and policy related to technology and cyber operations, led the orchestration of the event on behalf of the Hoover Institution and also served as overall moderator. Schneider is an IMA currently assigned to Space Systems Command after spending several years at Cyber Command.



Col. Bob Murray, IMA to the commander of the Joint Intelligence Operations Center at U.S. Cyber Command and veteran fellow with Stanford University's Hoover Institution, moderates the China cyber conference.

"What is special about the IMA program is how well it can leverage unique skillsets that Citizen Airmen bring to the Total Force," she said. "In my case, being an IMA allows me to take my academic work on cyberspace and strategic stability, as well as my professional network of scholars, directly to Cyber Command. Events like this conference highlight the extraordinary resources that the IMA program can be for the Total Force."

Maj. Oriana Skylar Mastro is a widely published academic and China expert at Stanford's Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies. She is currently assigned as an IMA to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command where she works in strategy and plans.

Mastro was on the conference's China Strategy panel, and contributed numerous ideas and perspectives on China's broader strategic aims, including those pertaining to the South China Sea and Taiwan.

"Understanding the nuances of Chinese culture and ideology is the doorway through which we can gain insight into what Beijing's ambitions are and how it means to achieve them," she said. "Academic research holds the key to that doorway." #ReserveReady #ReserveReform

'Talk to me, Airman'

Minnesota Reservists learn to shoot, move, communicate

By Chris Farley

Two rounds to the chest and one round to the head.

934th Aeromedical Staging Squadron Airmen engaged their targets using this shooting method while working in two-person teams with M4 carbines at the new Shoot, Move and Communicate course at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport Air Reserve Station, Minnesota, in October.

This close-quarter shooting method is called the Failure Drill. This technique isn't a critique of a shooter's performance or a countermeasure to succumb from a weapons malfunction. Instead, it is more of a failure on the engaging target's ability to return fire after receiving two rounds to the chest and one round to the head. Furthermore, adversaries are now wearing body armor. Therefore, the final round is needed to permanently neutralize the danger.

Tech. Sgt. Charles Foster, 934th ASTS section chief of medical records, was invited to run through the new course with other ASTS Airmen. The lane structure and design were a complete mystery to him. "From word of mouth, what they had set-up here, I knew that it was out in the woods and they had a bunch of different targets with contact areas." After going through the course five times, Foster said, "I didn't know they had this amazing of a set-up."

The 934th Security Forces Squadron spent most of the year building this course and making needed improvements to provide a viable training opportunity for Airmen. Before the SMC course was built, the area was a dense tree wood line with a lot of deadfalls. 934th SFS members used the base overlay to determine where the property started and ended before committing to this project.

Preceding the new course, Defenders used to maneuver between multiple 4 x 8 sheets of plywood to engage one target on a service road. The overall intensity of this course was limited due to its scale, aesthetics and allure. The SFS Defenders worked with what they had to conduct training; however, they wanted an attractive, resilient and motivating course. What they needed was an extreme course makeover, and they needed it right away.

"This whole plan fell on that cliché: design on a dime. Everything here was either from the forest naturally or donated wood from the Marines, Navy or actually from a stockpile here from pallets and things," said Master Sgt. Kory Soderquist, 934th SFS chief of training.

Tech. Sgt. Charles Foster, 934th Aeromedical Staging Squadron section chief of medical records, engages multiple targets during a shoot, move and communicate exercise at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport Air Reserve Station, Minnesota. (Chris Farley)

Soderquist and a group of SFS Airmen and civilians volunteered to be the project managers and architects of the new course. The first thing that had to go was the flat single straight-lined lane. The new course would curve and have an upper and lower path for more Airmen to go through. Instead of engaging one single target, Airmen now have 56. Some targets were placed in plain view and others were camouflaged in a dense thicket. This forced Airmen to quickly scan their lane and rapidly react. To provide a sense of realism in an austere environment, the SMC was placed in a densely forested area. As a result, teams can't see the course before they begin.

"My Defenders basically took a hopscotch board and added a roller coaster to it," said Lt. Col. Charles Trovarello, 934th SFS commander. "I was incredibly impressed with how they utilized the space because when you first looked at it, you think you can't possibly do anything more from what we already had set up."

"It is definitely one of those places we want to showcase because it's so new," said Soderquist. "It's also really functional, easy to go through and easy to clean up. Basically, it's zero maintenance when you have it up and running. You can run about 170 Airmen through it. It seems flawless and we have all the safety hazards out of the way. We haven't had a single hang-up. It's been good." #ReserveReady

(Farley is assigned to the 934th Airlift Wing public affairs office.)



A Desire to Help

307th Bomb Wing Airman makes second pandemic deployment

By Senior Master Sgt. Ted Daigle



When Capt. Aaron Bigio returned from San Antonio, Texas, recently, it marked the second time he'd volunteered to help battle the COVID-19 pandemic during the last year and a half.

The registered nurse assigned to the 307th Medical Squadron, Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, volunteered to help in New York City when COVID-19 was raging there in April 2020.

"Capt. Bigio is a fine officer and a very caring nurse," said Col. Dennis Britten, 307th MDS commander. "He is a great example of the type of Reserve Citizen Airmen we have, and I was not surprised by his selfless efforts to help fight COVID-19 a second time."

Unlike his deployment to New York, where he treated hospitalized civilian patients, Bigio said his efforts in Texas mainly consisted of testing military personnel preparing for deployments.

Bigio and the other Reservists were

part of a larger medical team that supported testing at Wilford Hall Medical Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, and Brooke Army Medical Center at JBSA-Fort Sam Houston.

He said the team tested some family members and federal employees, but the bulk of their efforts were centered on Army and Air Force personnel getting ready for deployments and travel.

"We tested between 250 and 300 people some days and at least 100 people every day," said Bigio.

Though conditions in San Antonio were different from New York, they could still be taxing. The group operated in a parking garage where high temperatures exceeded 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

"That made hydration difficult because you can't drink while wearing personal protective gear," explained Bigio.

One thing both deployments had in

Capt. Aaron Bigio, 307th Medical Squadron registered nurse, second from right, poses for a photo with other Reserve Citizen Airmen during a recent deployment to San Antonio, Texas. (courtesy photo)

common was the rapid nature in which they occurred. Bigio explained that the time between volunteering and going out the door was only a few days.

Also, like the New York deployment, Bigio had to take time off from his civilian role as a registered nurse. But he insisted he wouldn't hesitate to make the sacrifice again.

"I'm a Reservist, and that's what I do," he said. "I've only got 13 more years to help before I have to retire, and I want to do all I can to help my country."

#ReserveReady #ReserveResilient (Daigle is assigned to the 307th Bomb Wing public affairs office.)

Girls in Aviation

Minnesota Reservists encourage youngsters to consider career in the air



Story and Photos
By Maj. William Mojica

Several members of the 934th Airlift Wing, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport Air Reserve Station, Minnesota, recently participated in the 7th Annual Girls in Aviation Day event hosted by Women in Aviation International at the Flying Cloud Airport in Eden Prairie.

After the 2020 event was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, participating in this year's event was something the wing's Reserve Citizen Airmen looked forward to.

"This was my third year participating in the event and my first year organizing volunteers on behalf of our wing," said Master Sgt. Robert Lee, 934th Logistics Readiness Squadron acting first sergeant. "Having the opportunity to get other units involved presented a few challenges with COVID, but the benefits of being able to bring our members and have Air Force Reserve representation was great. I really want to increase our wing's involvement moving forward for many reasons, including increasing our diversity and inclusion with future Airmen and professionals."



Capt. Amy Forbes, 96th Airlift Squadron pilot, poses with a young girl at the 7th Annual Girls in Aviation Day at the Flying Cloud Airport in Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

GIAD is a free event for youth to learn about career opportunities in aviation and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

"The reason we put this on is because we want to introduce more girls to aviation as a career, a hobby, a love or an adventure," said Stephanie Goetz, vice president of WAI Stars of the North. "The thing about why this is so important is that roughly only 6% of pilots are female, and we want to increase that number. It creates a diversity of thought and a diversity of perspective."

In addition to traditional careers people think of with aviation, the 934th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron also had flight nurses available to speak to their role as medical aviators.

"I was honored to represent the AE community and share how we help our fellow service men and women and their families all over the world," said 1st Lt. Myra Costello, 934th AES flight nurse. "I was thrilled with the response we received from the children and their families. As a first-time participant, it was also great to talk to other women in aviation and see the progress that has been made over the years."

GIAD is aimed at encouraging female participation in STEM and aviation-related careers. Although the event is geared for girls ages 8-17, everyone is welcome to attend.

"It's a fun event and watching the kids' faces when answering their questions and seeing their inquisitiveness was incredible," Lee said. *#ReserveReform*

(Mojica is assigned to the 934th Airlift Wing public affairs office.)

1st Lt. Myra Costello, 934th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron flight nurse, shows a young girl how patients are secured on a stretcher.

Mortuary Affairs Training

Niagara Airmen travel to Dover to learn critical mission

By Tech. Sgt. Joshua Williams

Reserve Citizen Airmen from the 914th Air Refueling Wing's Force Support Squadron, Niagara Falls International Airport Air Reserve Station, New York, recently traveled to Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, for a week of training in support of the mortuary mission of providing dignity, honor and respect to fallen service members.

Some of the primary duties of force support Airmen in the services career field while deployed to AFMAO include care and support for family members of the fallen, the dignified transfer upon arrival at Dover, and dress and restoration, including the final uniform.

"Being here at AFMAO has been a great learning experience," said Staff Sgt. Grissel Reyes, 914th FSS, who was on her second training tour at Dover. "I'm grateful for the opportunity to be here and learn from the team in place. They've only been here for a while and are already a plethora of knowledge. I'm now considering volunteering."



Members of the 914th Force Support Squadron, Niagara Falls International Airport Air Reserve Station, New York, participated in a training exercise as part of the Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations Force Support Contingency Training at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware. (Tech. Sgt. Joshua Williams)

Dover is home to AFMAO, where the dignified transfer of all DoD personnel and dependents from overseas locations and those who die while supporting overseas contingency operations takes place.

"I previously deployed here, and it was a very honorable experience," said Staff Sgt. Parish Thacker, 914th FSS, who was assigned to the Fisher House, where family members of the fallen stay while awaiting the dignified transfer. "Coming back since my deployment offers me insight into the changes in processes and procedures, and helps me to prepare future Airmen who may deploy here, as well as stay connected with this mission."

The AFMAO mission has Total Force support consisting of more than 85 civilian staff and active-duty Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines, as well as Guard and Reserve personnel.

"It's been over 10 years since I've deployed here, and a lot has changed," said Master Sgt. William Bruce, 914th FSS. "To see the Fisher House completed and serving the families of the fallen is really impressive. This is what we are trained to do and it's quite a humbling experience." #ReserveReady

(Williams is assigned to the 914th Air Refueling Wing public affairs office.)

Master Sgt. Robert Carter learns the proper way to prepare bed linens at the Dover Fisher House. (Jason Minto)

Help Where It's Needed

Reservist excels at multiple tasks during deployment

By Tech. Sgt. Daryn Murphy

Senior Airman Ramandeep Kaur, a Reserve Citizen Airman assigned to the 911th Airlift Wing, Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station, Pennsylvania, came to Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait, this summer as a Defender originally assigned to the 387th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron. After arriving on station, she was quickly transferred to help the Office of Special Investigations Locally Employed Persons Screening Team because of her unique upbringing.

"I speak three other languages - Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu. That's basically what most other country nationals speak here," Kaur explained. "I was working at Cargo City since I got here in July until the first week of September. Then I was brought over to OSI."

Kaur was raised in India and moved to the United States when she was 10 with her family. Her special linguistic capabilities were not the only reason she was an obvious candidate to work in the investigations department doing background checks.

"I have a law enforcement background," she said. "First, I was a deputy sheriff for about three years in



Senior Airman Ramandeep Kaur, assigned to the Office of Special Investigations 242nd Detachment Locally Employed Persons Screening Team, participates in honor guard practice at Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait. Kaur is a Reservist from the 911th Airlift Wing. (Tech. Sgt. Daryn Murphy)

Northern Virginia. I was assigned to jails and didn't really like that. So, I left that and before I joined the Air Force, I was with Homeland Security as a contractor."

Kaur has been extremely busy since going to basic military training in October 2020.

"I got out of BMT and tech school and they said 'hey do you want to deploy?' I said, 'why not?'" she said. "A lot of good things have been happening for me since I got here."

Since arriving to ASAB, Kaur has also joined the base honor guard.

"Have you seen those uniforms?" she smiled as she explained. "I mean, just being able to put the uniform on and marching with pride, it just gives you goose bumps. They have the taps on the shoes and every step they take, it makes your heartbeat go faster. It's something I'm really passionate about."

Since joining the base honor guard, she said it has helped give her perspective on what she wants to do down the road in her military career.

"As far as in the Air Force, I want to join our honor guard and slowly build my steps up and I want to join big Air Force honor guard." Kaur explained "The big honor guard where I get to travel to different countries and present colors, it's such an honorable thing. I think that's one of the reasons why I joined, to be a part of something like that."

Even though she has only been in the Air Force for a short time, Kaur says she is staying focused on what's important to her.

"We take some things for granted, like the luxury of living in big houses," she said as she talked about deployment life. "I think we all get lost in our lala land sometimes, but I'll definitely be walking away from this just being grateful for everything that comes to you in life."

#ReserveResilient
(Murphy is assigned to the 386th Air Expeditionary Wing public affairs office.)

Supra Coders

Reserve Space Wing boasts two graduates of intensive training course

By Tech. Sgt. Frank Casciotta

Air Force Reserve Command has two new graduates of the intensive “Supra Coders” course, and they are both assigned to the 310th Space Wing’s 4th Space Warning Squadron at Buckley Space Force Base, Colorado.

The three-month course teaches students to become full stack developers – people who can perform front- and back-end coding for developing software. The course is followed by a three-month internship with one of the Air Force’s innovation hubs.

“All of our warfighting capabilities are reliant on software and communications,” said 2nd Lt. Felix Zhang, a section chief for the 4th SWS and recent graduate of the Supra Coder course. “By having the ability to create in-house software, we can tailor programs to meet specific needs of any organization, which provides us with exponentially more adaptability, agility and security.”

Senior Airman Emily Hosoya, a 4th SWS data system operator and a graduate of the first Supra Coder course held last year, is working on one of these applications to meet one of those specific needs. The Airman Comprehensive Assessment is a feedback worksheet between supervisors and their Airmen that lays out the groundwork for performance expectations, personal goal-setting and concerns.

“We are calling it 360 Feedback,” said Hosoya. “It will allow supervisors to send requests for anonymous feedback to members of their wing about subordinates. There are people supervising dozens of Airmen and it can be difficult to know each of them well. They may only see them when they are on their best, or worst, behavior. Being able to reach out to others who interact with them regularly can help them get a better picture.”

Any application supra coders develop is sent through Platform One, an infrastructure-as-a-service platform that serves as the central repository for all the applications developed within the Air and Space Forces. It checks the efficacy, security and functionality to mitigate cyber security vulnerabilities.

“The Platform One pipeline runs, understandably, very hefty security checks on all these programs, which is why we use TDD (test-driven development).” said Zhang.

TDD is a programing style designed to minimize any software bugs by following a methodology centered on frequent testing throughout the development process.

Zhang says he took the course thinking of his position as a leader now and in the future.

“I see this as a way of future-proofing our digital space, and I feel it is important for me as a leader to understand this language even if down the line I won’t necessarily be developing the software,” he said. “If someone comes to me with an innovative idea and I don’t understand the language (of coding), there could be missed opportunities.”

The Supra Coder course is open to officers and enlisted members. Applicants have to take a competency test and have approval from their commander to participate.

“The course does a very good job at teaching you to think like a developer,” said Zhang. “They don’t give step-by-step directions. It’s much more about learning how to research and problem solve in that language.” #ReserveReady #ReserveReform (Casciotta is assigned to the 310th Space Wing public affairs office.)



2nd Lt. Felix Zhang and Senior Airman Emily Hosoya, 4th Space Warning Squadron, look over software code on a laptop at Buckley Space Force Base, Colorado. They were the first two Reservists to complete the Supra Coder course that teaches Airmen and Guardians how to develop computer-based applications. (Tech. Sgt. Frank Casciotta)



'He Knew My Name'

Reserve Citizen Airman finds courage to seek help

By Staff Sgt. Nije Hightower

Staff Sgt. Shelby Pick, 446th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, on top of a C-17 wing at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. (Staff Sgt. Nije Hightower)

After years of trying to hide a painful medical condition, a Reserve Citizen Airman crew chief assigned to the 446th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, recently learned how important it can be to ask for help.

In 2016, now-Staff Sgt. Shelby Pick joined the Air Force Reserve with the hope of someday becoming a pilot. Shortly into basic training, she was injured and began to suffer from multiple stress fractures. Although she was in pain, Pick was determined to persevere through boot camp.

“I’m going to make it. I’m going to force myself through this,” Pick told herself repeatedly during basic training.

After graduation, a military training leader inquired about Pick’s injuries after noticing something was wrong when she participated in physical training. She told the trainers about her injuries, and walked on crutches for the rest of her time in technical training school.

When she returned to her unit, she saw several doctors, who recommended a wheelchair for six months to properly recover. Pick didn’t know what to do,

how this would affect her military career or her dreams of becoming a pilot. She decided that she was going to once again push through the injury until her military contract ended.

She pushed through the injury for five years while trying to fly under the radar in her unit. This led to her feeling invisible – but she wasn’t.

One day, Senior Master Sgt. Greg Neubert, the first sergeant for the 446th AMS, stopped by and spoke with Pick. Someone on her leadership team acknowledged her.

“He knew my name,” said Pick. “That was it. After that, I went to his office and broke down crying.”

After six years, Pick gained enough courage to ask her leadership for help to address her medical injuries.

“My heart was aching because I wanted to be the best and succeed and not fail,” said Pick.

Pick finally was ready to get the help she needed to excel in her military career.

As a first sergeant, Neubert advises the unit commander on matters of enlisted morale, welfare and conduct. He also helps provide the commander with a

mission-ready force, which includes assessing the health of unit Airmen.

After Pick opened up about her struggles with medical issues, Neubert encouraged her to go through the medical process. She is currently in physical therapy, on an extension and has the proper waivers in place to heal.

Pick was recently promoted to staff sergeant and won the John Levitow Award. The award goes to the student who achieves the highest overall standing from a combination of academic scores, performance evaluation and leadership qualities. It’s the highest honor awarded to a student in Airman Leadership School.

Pick re-enlisted and is excited to continue her Air Force career and being one step closer to fulfilling her dream of becoming a pilot. All it took for Pick to excel in her military career was someone to notice her. That gave Pick the courage to ask for help. #ReserveResilient (Hightower is assigned to the 446th Airlift Wing public affairs office.)





A C-130J Super Hercules flown by the 815th Airlift Squadron, Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi, departs while an A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft flown by the 354th Fighter Squadron, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, arrives at Rifle Garfield County Airport, Colorado. Active-duty Air Force, Air National Guard and Reserve Citizen Airmen gathered at the airfield to take part in the 22nd Air Force's flagship exercise Rally in the Rockies in September. (Lt. Col. Marnee A.C. Losurdo)

Rally in the Rockies

Airmen hone expeditionary skills at 22nd Air Force exercise

By Lt. Col. Marnee A. C. Losurdo

Active, Air National Guard and Reserve Airmen gathered in Colorado and Wyoming for 22nd Air Force's flagship exercise, Rally in the Rockies, late this summer. The exercise is designed to develop Airmen for combat operations by challenging them with realistic scenarios during military actions in hostile environments.

One of the three locations for the exercise was the Rifle Garfield County Airport, Rifle, Colorado. More than 100 Airmen were at Rifle taking part in the air operations portion of the exercise and honing expeditionary skill sets by taking part in Multi-Capable Airmen training. They learned skills from various Air Force jobs to include wet-wing defueling and Tactical Combat Casualty Care.

"The exercise is designed to enhance our capabilities, such as Agile Combat Employment, deployment and Agile Combat Support," said Maj. Christopher "Crash" Acs, 327th Airlift Squadron pilot with the Air Force Reserve's 913th Airlift Group at Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas. He was the exercise planner and detachment commander at Rifle.

"We are preparing Reserve and National Guard units to execute at the speed and range required to take on near-peer adversaries with a minimal foot print from austere environments to become more agile in mission execution and more resilient in our capability," Acs said.

For the exercise, Rifle served as a forward operating base, with dispersed operations from Peterson Space Force Base, Colorado,



Tech. Sgt. Melvin Tucker and Senior Airman Raymond Thomas get hands on Tactical Combat Casualty Care training during Rally in the Rockies (Lt. Col. Marnee A.C. Losurdo)

the main operating base for the exercise. Four A-10 Thunderbolt IIs with the 354th Fighter Squadron at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona, were at Rifle as part of the exercise, and C-130s flew in to support them.

When at a forward location, the goal is to operate with a small footprint, meaning a small number of Airmen who need to be agile in their ability to carry out the mission. To prepare Airmen, the exercise also focused on Multi-Capable Airmen training.

"We are having Airmen learn capabilities outside their day-to-day jobs to help them take on future challenges they may encounter by increasing their readiness and expanding their war-fighting capabilities in an expeditionary environment," said Chief Master Sgt. Timothy Nugent, 22nd Air Force logistics planner and exercise lead for MCA training. "We have aerial porters, maintainers, security forces and medical technicians doing things outside their career field, and that's by design."

The Airmen learned a variety of skills to include wet-wing defueling, Tactical Combat Casualty Care, forklift driving, pallet build-up and radio communication familiarization.

For most Logistics Readiness Airmen, or fuels technicians, it's out of the norm for them to wet-wing defuel. A wet-wing defuel procedure is used to quickly transfer fuel from one aircraft to another in forward operating bases where they don't have an established fuel storage facility. The aircraft lands, keeps engines running, and on-site ground crews transfer the fuel from the wing to a fuel truck. The fuel truck then transfers that fuel to another aircraft.

Staff Sgt. Ray Brown, a Reservist fuels technician with the 403rd Wing at Keesler AFB, Mississippi, has served for eight years and deployed to Southwest Asia for a year. It was his first exposure to the defueling process.

"It's always good to broaden your horizons in your career field and learn new things because you never know where you might deploy next and what situations you will encounter," he said.

One of those situations could be providing care to a fellow

Airman while under fire. To prepare them for that scenario, Airmen were trained on TCCC, which focuses on care under fire, tactical field care and tactical evacuation care.

"The goal is to treat injured combatants and limit the risk of further casualties, so basically you are accessing a casualty and treating them in what can kill them first," said Staff Sgt. Lydia Neyra, a Reserve medical technician with the 302nd Aeromedical Staging Squadron, 302nd Airlift Wing, Peterson SFB.

TCCC is framed around the MARCH concept where Airmen look for and treat massive bleeding, check a patient's airway, respiratory status, circulation, and treat the patient for hypothermia or head injuries. Once the classroom portion of the training was complete, Airmen were tested on what they learned in a care-under-fire scenario, treating patients while securing an area, returning fire and transporting casualties to a helicopter.

"It was an eye-opening experience. You can watch training like this, but to do this in person was a challenge as there was a lot going on and to think about, from taking care of the patient while getting shot at to knowing what you need to do next," said Tech. Sgt. Damon Lewis, a Reservist who works in the 403rd Maintenance Squadron engine shop. "I'd like to do this more often so I can get more efficient at it."

Tech. Sgt. Robert Craciun, a Reserve avionics technician with the 910th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, 910th Airlift Wing, Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio, said he found the training extremely beneficial.

"In a real-world situation where we are deployed, being a mission-capable Airman and knowing about each other's jobs allows us to help each other out, making us more efficient," he said. "It was a very good learning experience, and all Airmen should have this type of training."

"The training we get in exercises such as this is invaluable," said Acs. "We must arm our Airmen with the training, resources and equipment needed to engage in the high-end fight."

#ReserveReady

(Losurdo is assigned to the 403rd Wing public affairs office.)



An Air Force Reserve C-130J Super Hercules comes in for a landing on a four-lane highway as the kickoff event for Rally in the Rockies. (Maj. Ashley Walker)

Northern Exposure

Oklahoma Reservists train in Alaska

Story and Photos by
Tech. Sgt. Lauren Kelly

Reserve Citizen Airmen from the 507th Air Refueling Wing, Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, went to Alaska this summer to refuel F-22s assigned to the 90th Fighter Squadron.

The group of Reservists, consisting of three co-pilots, two aircraft commanders and two boom operators from the 507th Operations Group and six 507th Maintenance Group maintenance personnel, traveled to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, for a week over the summer.

According to the 465th Air Refueling Squadron director of operations and aircraft commander, Lt. Col. Marv Ashbaker, this effort was designed to give the co-pilots more hands-on experience flying the tanker.

“Exposing the co-pilots to a variety of different airfields, receivers and airspace environments is integral to their training and eventual transition from co-pilots to aircraft commanders,” said Ashbaker.

This was KC-135 co-pilot 1st Lt. Duncan Sutherland’s first trip to Alaska with the Okies, and it was even more unique because he was formerly a fuels system engineer for Lockheed Martin and worked with the F-22 for two years.

“Traveling to Alaska was an enriching experience for me,” said Sutherland. “Of course, the scenery flying over Alaska was beautiful, but we also had fun sightseeing and there were some cool receivers. So now, being a tanker pilot and getting to refuel them from the other side was awesome.”

Sutherland said due to a recent deployment, the unit’s flying hours have decreased due to limited aircraft



Lt. Col. Marv Ashbaker and 1st Lt. Duncan Sutherland, of the 465th Air Refueling Squadron, Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, perform an aerial refueling mission for F-22 Raptors at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

availability. He said he appreciated the opportunity to gain flying hours. Sutherland expects to reach his hour limits as a co-pilot within the next two to three years before being upgraded to aircraft commander.

According to 1st Lt. Aubrey Crawley, 465th ARS current operations officer, an effort like this requires extensive coordination with other units with the intent to meet training needs, not only for the 507th ARW but for other units striving to meet flying goals.

“Communication is key and crucial, especially with other current operations shops,” Crawley said.

“Tankers and their fuel are a limiting factor right now for training and are in high demand. F-22s have currencies and missions they have to accomplish as well year round, and our tankers facilitate accomplishing their training needs.”

Crawley is currently a co-pilot and will be upgraded to aircraft commander in the coming months. The 507th ARW is planning a trip in the near future, which will act as a type of pre-evaluation to the aircraft commander upgrade course for Crawley.

“I think we do a really good job here at the Okies from an operational and training standpoint,” said Crawley. “Our operational mission is going 365 days a year, and we plan trips and training scenarios designed to give co-pilots the opportunity to further their training, ultimately leading to upgrade opportunities.”

Overall, the 507th ARW’s trip to Alaska exposed the co-pilots to various

scenarios not available in Oklahoma or surrounding states, enabling the unit to deliver 153,000 pounds of fuel to 14 receivers. #ReserveReady

(Kelly is assigned to the 507th Air Refueling Wing public affairs office.)

An F-22 Raptor receives fuel from the Okies of the 465th Air Refueling Squadron, Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma.



A Decade of Excellence

Force Generation Center reaches historic milestone



Brig. Gen. Stacey Scarisbrick, commander of Air Force Reserve Command's Force Generation Center, gives a media interview immediately following a ceremony celebrating the 10th anniversary of the FGC at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia. (Misuzu Allen)

By Jon Quinlan

The men and women of the Force Generation Center joined local dignitaries and community leaders to celebrate the FGC’s 10th anniversary at a “Decade of Excellence” ceremony at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, in October.

The FGC is Air Force Reserve Command’s single organization responsible for generating all combat-ready forces. The FGC was also awarded the Air Force Organizational Excellence Award during the event.

“We’ve responded to hurricanes, earthquakes, forest fires, all to protect American lives and to take care of Airmen,” said Maj. Gen. Matthew Burger, AFRC deputy commander.

The vision for the FGC was born out of need. In 2010, one of the worst earthquakes in 200 years hit Haiti, causing an estimated \$14 billion in damages and killing more than 316,000 Haitians. In response, multiple Air Force Reserve Airmen and resources were activated to lead humanitarian efforts. This effort, called Operation Unified Response, pointed to the need for greater operational oversight of AFRC personnel in support of contingency and crisis operations.

On Oct. 1, 2011, AFRC activated the FGC with the mission to seamlessly accession Citizen Airmen to volunteer, mobilize and deploy while meeting combatant commander requirements.

The current FGC commander, Brig. Gen. Stacey Scarisbrick, showcased the achievements of the team during her remarks.

“A decade of excellence. While this might seem like a relatively short period of time, I assure you, when you consider it against the work accomplished by the center in the past 10 years, this milestone is definitely worthy of recognition,” Scarisbrick said.

The FGC performs all aspects of force generation to include oversight, visibility and accountability of more than 70,000

Air Force Reserve forces. The FGC mission also includes an enhanced command-and-control function for AFRC.

In the past 10 years, the FGC supported more than 166,000 off-station training missions, flying more than one million hours, transporting more than 765,000 passengers and moving almost 900,000 tons of cargo. The FGC has assisted in the mobilization of more than 72,000 Reserve Citizen Airmen in support of mobilization requirements.

Most recently, the FGC activated Reservists to help with COVID-19 medical and recovery support and to assist with the evacuation of Americans and at-risk Afghans out of Afghanistan.

“What better example than the pandemic where we moved 250 medical professionals with specific medical capabilities in 48 hours to New York to protect and save American lives,” Burger said. “Or what about Afghanistan? As the country literally crumbled, our forces rallied at speed to the point of need and generated air mobility power to redeploy our mission partners – partners we promised to bring back to America.”

In just the past year, the FGC executed 19,000 missions, including 32,000 flights. The center oversaw 167 Hurricane Hunter weather flights and supported more than 180 aerial spray missions.

“After 10 years, we have a cohesive strategy and a process to allocate resources, and quickly mobilize our Airmen to support our geographic combatant commanders. You bet we are a ready force. It’s because of the men and women of the FGC,” Burger said. #ReserveReady #ReserveReform

(Quinlan is assigned to the Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command public affairs office.)



Airmen load cargo onto a C-130J Super Hercules aircraft assigned to the 37th Airlift Squadron, Ramstein Air Base, Germany, during Operation Castle Forge at Larissa Air Base, Greece. Castle Forge provides a dynamic, partnership-focused training environment that raises the U.S. commitment to collective defense in the Black Sea region while enhancing interoperability alongside NATO allies.

Castle Forge



Reservists deliver agile airpower during Black Sea operation

Story by Capt. Andrew Layton,
Photos by Senior Airman Jessica Blair

A hulking C-130J Super Hercules sits on the moonlit tarmac of Larissa Air Base, Greece. A string of human figures emerges from a nearby hangar. Like ants, they make a quick procession into the back of the plane, which is already loaded with aircraft generators, tool carts and other bulky cargo. Moments later, the engines rev and the C-130 is airborne.

This flight is part of Castle Forge, an ongoing U.S.-led operation in the Black Sea region. Its purpose is to test the partnerships and interoperability that make Agile Combat Employment possible.



“We provide the agile combat airlift that the fighters require to operate from austere locations,” said the C-130’s pilot, Capt. Michael Plash, who is assigned to the Reserve’s 815th Airlift Squadron, 403rd Wing at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi. “Our aircraft are equipped to carry their personnel, cargo, fuel and support equipment to execute any mission set the fighters demand.”

Soon, the C-130 will touch down at Borcea AB, Romania, where the personnel and cargo will receive a package of F-15E Strike Eagles from the 4th Fighter Wing, Seymour Johnson AFB, North Carolina, inbound the next day.

Two weeks prior, Plash had no idea he would be in Eastern Europe. By definition, Castle Forge is meant to be carried out at short notice, but when other events in the U.S. European Command theater of operations put a high demand on airlift capability this autumn, planners at U.S. Air Forces Europe-Air Forces Africa turned to the U.S. Air Force Reserve for a solution.

“By the time the 403rd Wing received the official notification we were going to Castle Forge, that left us with only two weeks to prepare,” says Plash. “We needed to find Reservists who were capable of participating and then had to coordinate with USAFE, Air Force Reserve Command, the 22nd Air Force and numerous other agencies to meet the demands of Castle Forge, plus ensure all of

our members were properly trained and funded to execute the required tasking.”

Plash is a full-time Air Reserve Technician with the 815th AS, but many of his teammates are traditional Reservists. This means that many had to leave civilian employers and families at short notice, with few details about what their mission during Castle Forge would entail.

Against all odds, they made it happen. Alongside their active-duty counterparts from Ramstein AB’s 37th AS, they

Airmen and cargo are transported from Greece to Romania in an Air Force Reserve C-130J Super Hercules aircraft assigned to the 815th Airlift Squadron, 403rd Wing, Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi. The airlift supports Castle Forge’s objective of demonstrating the joint force’s combined ability to respond in times of crisis with a flexible, reassuring presence.

supported a key initiative that has become central to how the U.S. engages with its NATO allies and regional partners to strengthen interoperability.

“Agile Combat Employment, or ACE, is the ability to quickly reposition to austere airfields and quickly generate aircraft and missions, so that we can keep potential adversaries on their toes,” says Lt. Col. Harry Starnes, Castle Forge project officer for the 4th Fighter Wing. “The reason it is important to train with our



Air Force Reserve C-130J Super Hercules pilots assigned to the 815th Airlift Squadron fly Airmen and cargo from Greece to Romania on Oct. 18.

allies is that we are going to count on them and they are going to count on us to make this happen if we are ever actually called to fight in a conflict.”

As Castle Forge continued at Larissa AB, Greece, Borcea AB, Romania, and Graf Ignatievo AB, Bulgaria, the ability to rapidly move personnel and support equipment between these locations remained a central enabler of the F-15s’ ability to generate air power anytime from anywhere.

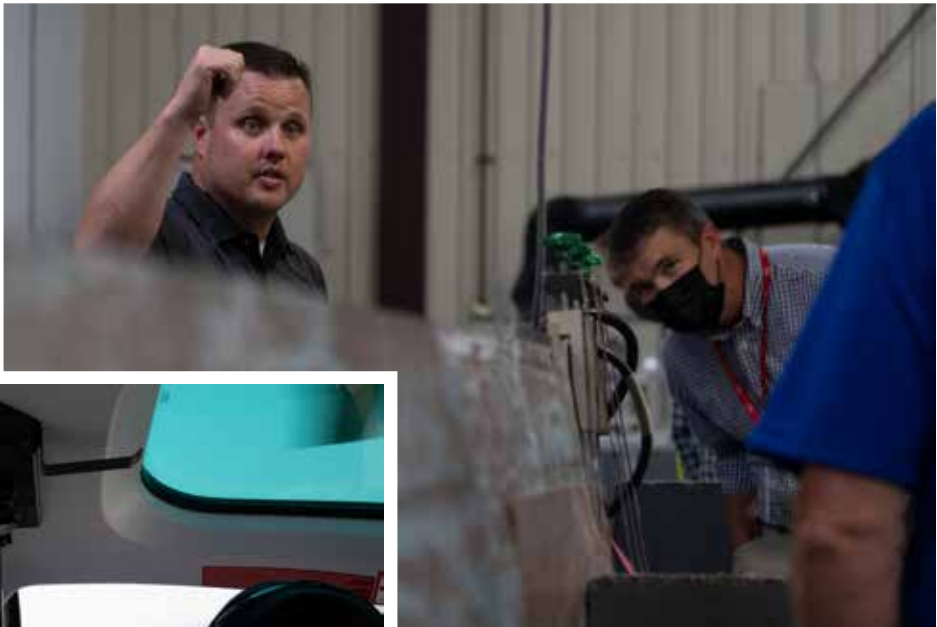
Meanwhile, Air Force leaders are recognizing the advantage of Total Force solutions like the one provided by Plash and his teammates at the 815th AS.

“The airlift movements associated with Castle Forge are a prime example of our active duty and Reserve teammates working together to get after the mission,” said Gen. Jeff Harrigian, NATO Allied Air Command and U.S. Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa commander. “Together, we were able to quickly forward-deploy the F-15s and generate combat-credible airpower in two key locations.” #ReserveReady

(Layton is assigned to the U.S. Air Forces Europe-Air Forces Africa public affairs office.)

Teaming Up for Training

307th Bomb Wing, Airbus exchange ideas, best practices



Left, Kent Stevens, instructor pilot for Airbus, and Lt. Col. Aaron Bohl pilot a H-125 helicopter at the Airbus facility in Grand Prairie, Texas. Airbus is an international helicopter company that provides training on its products to maintenance teams and aircrew. Top, Master Sgt. Ed Wytaske, 307th Operations Support Squadron first sergeant, describes aspects of rotor maintenance. When Wytaske isn't working as a traditional Reservist, he works full time for Airbus as an avionics technical instructor.

Story by Senior Master Sgt. Ted Daigle, Photos by Staff Sgt. Tambri Cason

Members of the Air Force Reserve's 307th Bomb Wing, Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, recently traveled to exchange training ideas with Airbus instructors at their facility in Grand Prairie, Texas.

Airbus is an international helicopter company that provides training on its products to maintenance teams and aircrew. The 307th Bomb Wing, as part of its mission, is responsible for all initial and requalification training for all potential B-52 Stratofortress aircrew in the Air Force.

The collaboration was the brainchild of Master Sgt. Ed Wytaske, 307th Operations Support Squadron first sergeant. When he isn't working as a traditional Reservist, Wytaske works full time for Airbus as an avionics technical instructor.

"I saw it as an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas on training techniques between the two schoolhouses," he said.

During the idea exchange, B-52 instructors and wing leadership from the 307th OSS, the 307th Operations Group

and the 93rd Bomb Squadron were able to ask Airbus aviation, pilot and maintenance instructors about their best practices. They also saw demonstrations with software, tools and simulators used at the company's training site.

Col. David Anderson, 307th OG commander, said the idea exchange offered the B-52 instructors a unique perspective.

"Our instructors were able to share best practices and virtual reality training ideas with leaders in the aviation industry," he said. "That insight can help give us some idea of where we are in our training and ways to move forward in the future."

Both Anderson and Wytaske affirmed that this first collaboration between the two entities was productive and spoke of the possibility for future idea exchanges. #ReserveReady #ReserveReform

(Daigle is assigned to the 307th Bomb Wing public affairs office.)



Senior Airman Jared Moon, left, poses with his brother, Senior Airman Joel Moon, at Hill Air Force Base, Utah. The brothers joined the Air Force Reserve together and are currently firefighters with the 419th Civil Engineer Squadron. (Senior Airman Erica Webster)

Brothers Senior Airman Joel Moon, 29, and Senior Airman Jared Moon, 25, are serving together as firefighters with the 419th Civil Engineer Squadron at Hill Air Force Base, Utah.

Both brothers were on track to become welders and had no interest in joining the military; however, a conversation with their uncle shifted their mindset.

"Our uncle started his firefighting career in the Air Force Reserve with this same unit," Joel said. "He talked to us about this career path and we became interested."

With the idea now in their head, Jared and Joel enlisted a few months apart and by January 2018, both were Reservists with the 419th Fighter Wing.

Joining the Reserve at the same time had a significant impact on their relationship, and attending basic military training together allowed them to create a special and unique bond.

"We left for BMT on the same day," Joel said. "The squadron was the same but we ended up in different flights."

Despite being apart while in the same location, the brothers still had the chance to see and speak with each other.

"We attended the same church together on Sunday," Jared said. "That was our day to talk about how things were going, how we were feeling and give each other advice."

After graduating BMT, they continued their training together at the fire academy.

"Our relationship was good before, but after spending six months in Texas together, it got better," Joel said. "There were hardships and difficulties, but going through it together brought us a lot closer."

During their time in tech school, they found themselves depending on each other to get through those difficulties.

"We've spent some tough times together," Jared said. "But we trust and can relate to each other a lot more now."

Since joining the Air Force Reserve, they've had the opportunity to not only obtain their desired skillset, it's also allowed them to grow.

"Initially when I joined, I was only

going to do one term, but my mindset has changed," Joel said. "I've learned so many skills and qualities along the way that are helpful in every aspect of my life."

Attention to detail, hard work, structure and organization are things they've both acquired during their time in service, they said.

"I've enjoyed my time in the Air Force," Jared said. "I've attended different trainings and schools, traveled, did fun things and met different people. It's been such a great experience serving."

Both brothers have been able to utilize their military training and obtain jobs as civilian firefighters. Joel works with the 75th Air Base Wing at Hill and Jared works at the Utah Test and Training Range.

"What I've learned helps guide me and makes life easier," Jared said. "There's been no issue using what I've learned as an Airman in life outside of the military."

#ReserveResilient

(Webster is assigned to the 419th Fighter Wing public affairs office.)



Reserve Citizen Airmen from the 507th Air Refueling Wing, Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, refuel an F-22 assigned to the 90th Fighter Squadron, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. For more on the Okies' recent training operation in Alaska, see the story on page 18. (Tech. Sgt. Lauren Kelly)